

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

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S E C R E T AMMAN 6828

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT,SY

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN REPORT ON SYRIAN DEVELOPMENTS

1. PRIME MINISTER RIFAI PROVIDED ME WITH FOLLOWING INFORMATION RECEIVED BY CABLE TODAY FROM JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS. IT SUPPLEMENTS INFORMATION WHICH KING REFERRED TO YESTERDAY IN TALK WITH ASSISTANTSECDER ELLSWORTH AND EARLY WHICH RIFAI PROVIDED TO ME. OBVIOUSLY DAMASCUS IS IN BETTER POSITION TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON, BUT WE PASS IT ON FOR THEIR INFORMATION AND COMMENT ALSO.

2. LAST EVENING A LARGE EXPLOSION WAS SET OFF IN SYRIAN INTELLIGENCE HEADQUARTERS. IN ADDITION, PALESTINIAN UNITS WERE FIRING AT VEHICLES AND STOPPING THEM ALONG THE DAMASCUS-MEZZE ROAD. SOME OF THE PALESTINIANS WERE CAPTURED AND THEY TURNED OUT TO BE PFLP MEMBERS. SYRIANS QUESTIONED THEM AND FOUND OUT THERE WERE SEVERAL ADDITIONAL TIME BOMBS PLACED TO GO OFF, BUT WERE CAUGHT IN TIME. PALESTINIANS SAID ATTACKS WERE PROTEST AGAINST SYRIAN POLICY OF RAPPROCHMENT WITH US AND PRESENCE OF AMERICAN DELEGATION (SECRETARY BUTZ) IN DAMASCUS.

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3. THIRD REPORT CONCERNED DISAFFECTION OF SYRIAN AIR FORCE

PILOTS STATIONED AT DUMAYR AIR BASE. THEY ARE REPORTED BY JORDANIAN EMBASSY IN DAMASCUS TO BE IN STATE OF ORAL MUTINY WITH REGIME. PRESUMABLY THIS MEANS THEY ARE REFUSING TO TAKE ORDERS.

4. RIFAI COMMENTS THAT HE IS INCREASINGLY WORRIED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIA AND HOW THEY EFFECT ASAD'S FLEXIBILITY TO CONTINUE HIS PRESENT COURSE OF SUPPORTING, OR AT LEAST TOLERATING, STEP-BY-STEP NEGOTIATIONS. IF THE OPPOSITION, AMONG WHICH HE COUNTS THOSE UNDER INFLUENCE OF IRAQI BAATH, AS WELL AS SOME SYRIAN BAATHISTS, MANAGES TO BOX IN OR BEGIN DIRECTING ASAD'S POLICIES TOWARDS WAR, HE BELIEVES RESULTS FOR JORDAN AND THE AREA WILL BE VERY TROUBLESOME.

PICKERING

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